

would satisfy the needs of the Haida. Their concerns are of the utmost importance to me and to all Canadians.

Senator Murray: I will do what my honourable friend asks. As far as the Haida are concerned, he will be aware that discussions have been going on with them for many months and it is hoped that an understanding can be reached quite soon.

THE SENATE

FILLING OF VACANCIES—REASONS FOR DELAY

Hon. Azellus Denis: I would like to ask a question of the Leader of the Government in the Senate. I read in yesterdays *Globe and Mail* that Mr. Mulroney is not in a hurry to fill the eight Senate vacancies. I note that, of those eight, six will require to be appointed from provinces with Liberal governments. Has the federal government any other reason for delaying those appointments than that suggested in the article to which I referred?

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): Honourable senators, I must say that I am not aware that the provincial governments in question have, in fact, submitted lists of nominees to the Prime Minister, as provided for in the political accord reached at Meech Lake. However, I can inquire about that matter.

Senator Denis: Is it not the duty of the federal government to ask the provincial governments to recommend names to fill those vacancies?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, I am not aware that the political accord is precise on whether the federal government should formally request a list of nominees first, or whether the provinces can simply submit a list of nominees, as I would have thought would be the case. I trust we are not getting into the, "After you, my dear Alphonse!" routine.

There is nothing to prevent the provincial governments in question from submitting a list of nominees, with or without a formal request from the federal government. I shall make inquiries as to the status of this matter in respect of all the vacancies and see what information I can properly bring to the public's attention at this time.

Senator Denis: Please do.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, may I ask a supplementary question and ask Senator Murray, when he is doing his research, to find out whether a list has been submitted by the Premier of Nova Scotia?

Senator Murray: Yes, I shall do that, honourable senators. Indeed, my response was intended to indicate that I would look into the status of these vacancies in all provinces.

Hon. Charles McElman: Perhaps the minister would like to arrange with the provinces to add this as an additional prize in the Lotto 6/49 weekly draw!

[Senator Marchand.]

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

STATUS OF AND STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO CANADIAN TRADE AMBASSADOR—GOVERNMENT RESTRAINT ACTION

Hon. Charles McElman: Honourable senators, two weeks ago I asked the Leader of the Government to determine whether Mr. Simon Reisman is still a trade ambassador in the employ of the government.

Hon. Lowell Murray (Leader of the Government and Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations): That very night I attended a meeting of the cabinet, and I found Ambassador Reisman at or near the table. I take it for granted that he is still on the payroll.

Senator LeBlanc: Are you sure he was not under the table?

Senator McElman: My honourable friend suggests that he may have been under the table.

Senator LeBlanc: Coaching Crosbie!

Senator Murray: Never! That would be a great injustice. He is a very temperate man.

Senator McElman: Then my ancillary question would be whether, having determined that, the government has made any attempt to put a leash on this gentleman to have him refrain from entering political debate at the national level?

Senator Murray: Honourable senators, I hope my friend and others are not unduly sensitive about remarks made by Ambassador Reisman in the course of his duties. He was the chief negotiator for Canada in the free trade negotiations. He clearly supports free trade. He feels, and justifiably so, that he has something of substance and importance to say to the Canadian people on the subject—

Senator LeBlanc: He always has.

Senator Murray: —as he did when he negotiated the Auto Pact with the United States for the then Government of Canada.

He has made comments about the role of the Senate, which, as I indicated the other day, I believe are only restatements of the obvious. He made what I thought were laudatory remarks about some people, in particular the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, when he described him as a "free-trader." Coming from Ambassador Reisman, that should be considered a compliment.

Senator Flynn: Beyond the call of duty!

Senator McElman: That falls somewhat short of the names that he has been called on occasion.

May I remind the Leader of the Government in the Senate that I do not disagree with what Mr. Reisman says when he speaks to the Free Trade Agreement as such, but I would remind him of the quotation I gave him two weeks ago taken from that impeccable journal, *The Daily Gleaner* of Fredericton, dated May 10, 1988.